

THE EYE SHIELD



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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue twenty-three of The Eye Shield. The Correspondence section is happily well stocked this issue, but I'm always keen for more. If any of the opinions below stir you, please do get in touch with me here at Eye Shield Towers. In addition to this, I have, of course, compiled another unbelievably riveting issue of TES for you all, including my personal top ten most anticlimactic deaths, and the battle of the Dungeon maids. I bet you can't wait to start, so please; be my guests.

Challenge question: Which of the three Knightmare monks was never asked by a dungeoneer to prove his identity?

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Eye Shield.

My name is Andrew and I'm 15. I only remembered Knightmare from my youth, but thanks to this site it all came back to me. I'm just glad Challenge is showing reruns. Thanks for rekindling my love for the Greater Game.

My pleasure, Andrew. You are very young as Knightmare fans go, and the fact that you still recall enjoying the programme at such a young age just goes to show how durable Knightmare is. Thanks for writing.

Here is something else from Steven Webberley.

Dear Eye Shield.

About the Knightmare books. Although I only own one - the first one - and have never read the others, I find it a very enjoyable read. I recently decided to read it again and there were details I missed from the last time I read it. I also worked out that although this book is referred to as *Knightmare: Can You Beat The Challenge*, I personally think the *Can You Beat...* part refers to the reader's quest bit at the back of the book. This book is well written and researched well. The Gruagach is a really nasty villain. There are also mysteries like whether the Sheriff of Nottingham secretly knows that Vestan's champion is out to destroy Treguard. I've always believed that an outlaw whom we now refer to as Robin Hood could well have existed - as the book says, myths tend to have a grain of truth behind them. Have you ever read any of the other books? What are these like and what would you consider your favourite to be and why?

Thanks for your views on the first Knightmare book, Steven. I agree with you about the title; that's why I always refer to the book simply as Knightmare. The Gruagach certainly is a nasty villain, and the mystery surrounding him is intriguing. I like the bit with Robin Hood as well. As for the other six books, my extensive summaries in I

Think I Read Somewhere *in TES issues 11 - 17 should tell you all you want to know. I'm not sure which one is my favourite, particularly as the last three are quite different from the first four. If I had to pick a favourite from each group, I think The Labyrinths of Fear is very exciting, and I enjoy all the different characters in Lord Fear's Domain.*

I received this opinion from a reader named J. Grocott-Jones, and I know it is a bone of much contention amongst us Knightmare fans. Form your own opinions about the following.

Dear Eye Shield.

On the subject of the Short Cut, I am inclined to agree with what Alan Boyd (one of Dunston's advisors) says about it on the *series* page of the website – everybody seems to think that because the quest was shorter, it must have been easier. Difficulty cannot be directly correlated with length.

I personally do not like the Short Cut, as I would rather have seen another winner-free season due to lack of time than... well, what actually happened. Although I accept that Dunston's quest was not guaranteed to succeed thanks to the Short Cut, I still feel dissatisfied by this as a win. What do you think, readers? Do let me know, won't you?

This is from a reader named Liam Callaghan.

Dear Eye Shield.

I happened across the Knightmare website about three months ago, and have been reading all of The Eye Shield back issues and new editions. I am impressed - great job, Jake. I've placed an order for the original Knightmare books online, and am waiting for them to arrive. I have a lot of them already, but some of them are a little dilapidated after years of fond reading. One thing that struck me, even when I was eight years old, is a mistake in the book "Fortress Of Assassins". If, after vanquishing the Seigneur Des Mouches, you go through the central door and get attacked by bats, you have two options - to cast the STEALTH or the SHIELD spell. Is it just me, or are the instructions the wrong way round? The first time I tried that door, I had and used the SHIELD spell, and a sticky end followed. I was confused, so I looked at what happened if you use the STEALTH spell, and it says "*the bats cannot penetrate your magical forcefield*" and you survive to reach the final decision. This can't be just me - somebody boobed! Apart from that, it's a great book. I have *The Labyrinths of Fear*, *Fortress of Assassins*, *The Sorcerer's Isle* and *The Forbidden Gate*, and I've placed an order for the first one. Out of what I have, *The Labyrinths of Fear* is my favourite for adventure, and *Fortress of Assassins* comes top for the story bit. Of course, this could change when I get my hands on the very first book.

I'm glad you enjoy TES, Liam - thanks for reading. You are quite right about that little error in Fortress of Assassins. I changed it in my book with a biro several years ago, so perhaps now other readers will wish to do the same. You should enjoy the first book – I think the story is excellent. Readers, Liam recommends www.abebooks.co.uk if you are looking to buy any of the Knightmare books.

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 7. Level 1/2.

THE FIRE ROOM

This was one of Lord Fear's technologically advanced puzzles introduced into series 7. It was a dark room that had four layers of floor with pits and two sliding blocks in between each of them. When the blocks moved, fireballs shot out of the walls on either side. It was no easy task to complete this puzzle as the dungeoneer needed to be directed across one of the unstable blocks not only at a time when it was not going to move and send them toppling into the pit, but also at a time when it would not lead the dungeoneer right into the path of a fireball. A good strategy was to walk along one wall when all the blocks were lined up next to it, but this still required the advisors to keep a close eye on the fireballs.

I think this puzzle would probably have claimed itself some victims if not for the fact that the team always had to make use of a spell or item to help them complete the challenge. While Simon IV and Ben III both used seeing-eye spells to help them in the challenge, Barry used a FIREPROOF potion to protect himself against the fireballs. You could therefore argue that the puzzle was not given a fair chance to substantiate itself, particularly as (unlike the easier version of the room without the fireballs that also featured in series 7) it did not return for series 8. At least the magical help that the teams had was not always completely unwarranted, as both Ben and Barry had to pick up items from one of the strips of floor - Ben had to get a firestone for Smirkenorff; Barry some witch amber for Greystagg. It was a good puzzle and was possibly underused in the series.

I would have liked to have seen it featured without spells to help the teams, maybe in level three as it would have fitted quite well into the arsenal of the Black Tower of Goth, but never mind. I'll get to the scores before I go off on one again, I think.

Difficulty: 8 Had to keep an eye on the fireballs and the floor - tricky.

Killer Instinct: 2 Given more challengers, it probably would have got one.

Gore Factor: 4 I guess it could have been quite spectacular.

Fairness: 6 Possibly a bit much for level one.

ADVENTURE TIME

The score is Dungeon 8, Humans 3. Level one is nearly over for this team, but does Abby have the necessary tools to survive? Game on!

Abby is in the blocker's thrall.

"Password!" the awesome face commands.

"Preening" says Abby.

The blocker shoots off, and Abby's advisors direct her out. She emerges into a small room with a large metal door as the only visible exit.

"Here is a familiar sight, team, for this is the Great Door at the end of level one" Treguard booms. "Let's just hope that Smirkenorff is as good as his word."

The door clanks upwards and clangs into place. Beyond is the immense back of the dragon.

"Welcome, Abby" comes Smirkenorff's voice from his back-turned head. "Come and join me, if you will, then perhaps we can see about getting you to level two."

The advisors guide Abby onto Smirkenorff's back, and direct her to the dragon-rider's saddle. She climbs over the back and sits down.

"What have you brought to fuel my efforts?" Smirkenorff asks.

"A dragon mint" Abby replies.

The dragon's head immediately swivels round and a long pink tongue extends from the mouth. It receives the dragon mint, and Smirky is crunching it noisily before long. When he has finished, he starts to flap his wings.

"Right, to level two it is" Smirkenorff says. "Oh dear, it's nearly ten years since I last did this. I hope I can remember the way."

The advisors watch as the dragon carries their dungeoneer across fields and oceans, flapping his powerful wings majestically. After a while, a ruined castle comes into sight.

"Ah, this should do" Smirky says approvingly. "That's the good thing about level two; there are so many entrances that you're almost bound to find one if you keep flying for long enough."

He makes a smooth landing in the keep's grassy courtyard.

"Off you go then, Abby" Smirky says somewhat impatiently. "There's a portal by my tail that should take you straight into level two."

Abby thanks him for the ride and the advisors take her off his back. Everything goes black for a moment, and then the team see where Abby has arrived. It is a large blue room with a single exit. As there appears to be nothing else to see, the advisors start to direct her out, but are

stopped short as a large transparent image of Merlin crashes into the room in a blast of thunder and lightning.

"Listen, team, this is most irregular" Treguard puzzles. "For it is usual for Merlin to wait to be called before appearing in level two."

"That's quite true, but today is a little different" Merlin twitters. "I've done the stupidest thing; I've stumbled into one of Mogdred's traps. I am being held deeper in the level, and must use my power to reach out to you, Abby, and appeal for your help."

"Of course I'll help" Abby replies. "What do you need?"

"There is an object placed on this level that can undo the magic that binds me," Merlin explains. "But I'm not sure exactly what it looks like. If you can find it and release me, I'll certainly assure your passage to level three."

"I'll do everything I can to find it," promises Abby.

"Thank you, Abby" smiles Merlin. "You are most kind. By the way, although I can't tell you what you're looking for, I can tell you something that may help you bring it to me. The third step is the *shield block*. Now, be on your way."

Merlin disappears and Abby is directed out, into the level two clue room. The team must choose from a key, a gauntlet and a small transparent green globe. They tell Abby to take the key, but are unsure what the other two might be used for.

"Team, I think that that globe is an anode of power," Treguard tells them. "It is most useful for dispelling holding spells."

They decide to take the anode, and direct Abby out. She finds herself standing at the edge of Merlin's pit.

"Team, I'm sure that the three steps will get you across here as usual" Treguard says. "Yet I'd love to know how Merlin intends to appear if he is indisposed elsewhere."

The team direct Abby into mimicking a sword thrust, a spear throw and a shield block to complete the path. As Abby crosses the pit, Hordriss appears on the throne.

"Ah, I see a substitute is being used" Treguard grins teasingly.

"I am not a substitute, Treguard" Hordriss insists. "Merely an alternative. Still, one must say that these menial duties are somewhat beneath one. However, we may as well get on with it. Right then, Abby, you know the rules; I need two correct riddle answers from you if you want to earn some magic. Are you ready?"

"Completely" Abby affirms.

"Then here is my first," declares Hordriss. "What runs but has no legs, and has bed yet never rests?"

"It's a river," says Abby confidently.

"Truth accepted," returns Hordriss. "Here is my second. What gets wetter as it dries?"

The advisors appear stumped.

"Think of the different ways that the verb *dry* can be used" Treguard suggests helpfully.

"It's a towel!" declares an advisor.

"Towel" says Abby.

"Truth accepted" smiles Hordriss. "Well done, Abby. The name of the spell I gift you is *shadow*. Good luck with your quest."

Hordriss disappears and the advisors direct Abby out. She emerges into a red room with a high archway. Merlin is standing in a triangular red forcefield.

"Ah, Abby, it's marvellous to see you" he smiles. "I just hope you can help me."

"Take the anode, Abby" Treguard instructs her. "And roll it very carefully across the floor into the field."

She does so, and the wizard is released.

"Thank you a thousand times, my dear" Merlin says graciously. "I must learn to be more careful in future. Now I must return to my study, but not without rewarding you for your kindness. I gift you one use of the spell *rust*. Farewell, and good luck."

Merlin disappears in a blinding flash, and Abby is directed out. She finds herself in a vast empty cave.

"Beware, team," Treguard warns. "For the emptiest vessels often make the most noise."

Sure enough, Mogdred appears in front of Abby.

"At last we meet, Abby" the fiend sneers. "I must say that I am not happy that you released my prisoner. Still, if you pledge yourself to me then you can make amends. If you do not then I shall take my revenge. Well, will you pledge yourself to me?"

"No" she replies immediately.

"Very well" booms Mogdred. "Then meet your doom!"

As he disappears, a horde of ugly goblins scuttles into the cave, armed with daggers and clubs.

"Extreme warning!" cries Treguard. "Take action or your quest ends now."

"Spellcasting:" says the spellcaster. "S-H-A-D-O-W."

Abby transforms into a shadow of herself and is able to slink through the creatures and out of the cave. She finds herself in the Corridor of the Catacombs, back in solid form. The only unbarred door is blocked by the

metal figure of the Automatum.

"Warning, team, your exit is blocked," notes Treguard.

The Automatum suddenly clanks into action and starts to raise his weapon.

"Spellcasting:" says the spellcaster. "R-U-S-T."

The warrior clatters to the floor, as his mechanism is rendered useless. The advisors are then able to guide Abby through the door. The next chamber contains a round stone well that is blocked by a large golden lock.

"As you know, team, the Dungeon's illusionary magic is not bound by the normal laws of your world" Treguard says. "However, I doubt that this misplaced lock is going to cause you much trouble."

Abby is told to hold the key out in front of her as she approaches the well. Sure enough, the lock disappears, allowing Abby to climb in, and descend to level three. The first room is a vast hall with two exits, one bearing the title SHORT CUT.

"Welcome to level three, team" says Treguard. "Already, it seems, you have a choice to make. Will you continue on the path of truth, or risk all for the promise of a shorter journey?"

The advisors become involved in a heated argument about whether it would be wise to use the short cut. Eventually, two of them persuade the third that they should take Abby through the door marked SHORT CUT, to try and save time. The dungeoneer is directed through the appropriate door, into the Corridor of Blades. A serrated saw is shooting towards Abby.

"Right!" yells an advisor.

As the blades keep coming, Abby has to keep dodging them. However, the advisors direct her well and she completes the challenge. She is directed through a door in the wall of the corridor. The advisors are both shocked and dismayed to see Abby emerge into a familiar room: Brangwen's chamber.

"Oh dear, team, what on Earth are you doing here?" queries Treguard.

"Hold, intruder!" commands Brangwen as she manifests. "None may pass here until they have answered my conundrums. I seek three... wait a minute, you look familiar. Have we not met before, dungeoneer?"

"Yes" Abby affirms.

"What are you doing back here?" Brangwen demands. "Did you retrieve the Shield?"

"No, I'm still looking for it."

"Well, I'm certainly not going to give you another quest until you've completed the first one. What is your name?"

"Abby."

"Well, Abby, perhaps you'd like to explain how you got here."

"I had just entered level three" Abby tells the wall monster. "And I was directed through a door marked SHORT CUT. The Corridor of Blades was on the other side, and it brought me back here."

"Oh dear" chuckles Brangwen. "Your friends have made a most dreadful mistake. You must know that the short cut connects levels one and three."

"Yes, but we thought it was one-way" protest the advisors.

"Why on Earth should it be?" Brangwen retorts. "If you take the short cut in level three then you're bound to end up back in level one. I'm sorry, Abby, but you can't have a new quest if you didn't complete the old one. Better luck next time."

As the wall monster disappears, the room goes black and the Dungeon bell sounds.

"Well I'm sorry, team, but I'm fairly sure I did warn you that the short cut was not the path of truth," Treguard reminds them. "You strayed from the path, and now your quest is over. Spellcasting: D-I-S-M-I-S-S."

The score is now Dungeon 9, Humans 3. Who will be next to take the challenge? Find out in the next Adventure Time.

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Famous Last Words III

You know the drill by now, readers - name the characters whose last words these are, together with the appropriate series, episode and dungeoneer.

1. "And that is positively the last time I let you practise on me you... you useless magicienne, you! Ooh, I'm off."
2. "Right, that way, face-ache, go on, push off!"
3. "I have other fish to fry. Farewell and fair chance."
4. "I think I sees my nosh!"
5. "If you're ignorant then you've got to remain so, that's what I always say. Bye now."
6. "Don't he talk a lot, no wonder they stuck a bucket on his head!"
7. "Sorry, but beat it! You'll get us all killed. Motley!"
8. "There, you have your wish. Farewell."
9. "What about the amber forest then, mistress, eh, eh, eh? What about the amber for the solstice then, eh, eh, eh?"
10. "There is the portal; use it to speed you on your way across the Great Mire. Go!"
11. "You will, of course, receive further reward on completion of your task. Now hurry, there is little time to lose!"
12. "This one's too smart for Jack; we go for easier pickings."

REMEMBER HIM?

Series 5. Level 1/2.

SIR HUGH DE WITLESS

Sir Hugh was one of the very few actual knights in Knightmare. Mark "Lord Fear" Knight donned his red surcoat and trusty broadsword. Sir Hugh rode a white horse called Nedly, of whom he was very fond. The curse laid upon this lone hero - apparently by Hordriss after an altercation - was a compulsion to go around rescuing people, whether or not they needed or wanted to be rescued. This included dungeoneers, which is why Treguard described the spellbound knight as a "well-meaning hazard" on one occasion. Woe betide the dungeoneer who actually let Sir Hugh rescue them, as he would undoubtedly have delivered them back to Knightmare Castle and the quest would be judged a failure:

"I'm going to rescue you; I'm going to take you all the way back where you came from, what about that, eh? - Sir Hugh.

So, how did the dungeoneers avoid this fate? Sir Hugh's first appearance with Sarah in level two was the character's introduction. Sarah explained to him in no uncertain terms that she really didn't need rescuing, and managed to satisfy the spellbound knight by agreeing to be escorted further into the level. This escort proved useful, as Sir Hugh prepared to face a goblin hunting party as Sarah exited from the next chamber. When Gwendoline and winning dungeoneer Ben encountered Sir Hugh in the forest, Gwendoline threatened Sir Hugh. He promptly rescued her by picking her up and hauling her off, leaving Ben to continue on his way.

Later in the series, dungeoneer Alex used a HERO spell to call on Sir Hugh when he was accosted by Skarkill. Alex really did need rescuing on this occasion and Sir Hugh performed the job admirably, sending Skarkill firmly on his way. Sir Hugh's last appearance was in the final episode of the series, when he was involved in a very incidental scene with Kelly II and Sylvester Hands. Hands contrived a story about how Kelly had attacked him, so Sir Hugh rescued Hands from Kelly by carrying him off, just as he had earlier done to Gwendoline. It was a pretty pointless scene, but good for a giggle I suppose. Anyway...

Fear Factor: 4 He certainly intimidated Skarkill with no trouble.

Killer Instinct: 2 Not physically, but if he'd "rescued" anyone...

Humour Rating: 5 Serious in himself, but clearly had a high comedy value.

Oscar Standard: 7 Dare I say a slightly tongue-in-cheek performance?

MY TOP FIVE KNIGHTMARE ANTICLIMACTIC DEATHS

Here is a run-down of the five deaths on Knightmare that I feel are the most anticlimactic. Imagine a situation where a team have blundered very badly and the watchers at home are looking forward to a good classic Knightmare death. The following five deaths are the ones that left me with a slight feeling of letdown or flatness. It was surprisingly hard for me to think of five such deaths for this article and I believe that these are the only ones, but if anyone wishes to share a different opinion with me and other Eye Shield readers then I would be most pleased to hear from you. Anyway, here is my list.

5. Nicola II. Series 7, episode 5.

Having failed to take a potion called *nightsight*, Nicola was killed off in a very dark tunnel. The trouble for us at home is that we could see very little of what was going on in the tunnel, and what we did see was only via the magic mirror in the antechamber. It appears that a large troll caught up with Nicola, but goodness knows what he did to her. The only thing we could be sure of was Lord Fear's disembodied voice gloating over another dungeoneer death: "*Two-nil, I think. Nice one.*" - **Lord Fear**. I always found that slightly disappointing.

4. Jamie. Series 2, episode 11.

Jamie was trapped by Ariadne because he had not been quick enough to pick up the parts of a MEDAL spell. Rather than being given the delightfully macabre crunching noises that we were treated to when Ariadne ate Nicola I in series 4, Treguard simply explained to Jamie's advisors that they were trapped and then Ariadne appeared to wander off, perhaps saving Jamie for later. Perhaps it is unfair to compare this to Nicky's death, but having become well familiarised with series 4, I was disappointed by Ariadne's efforts with Jamie when I saw series 2 again.

3. Alan. Series 6, episode 7.

Alan had just entered level three at the end of episode 6, and the introduction to episode 7 contains Treguard and Pickle being very excited at the prospect of a successful quest. ("*Close to the Sword, they are!* - **Pickle**. "*I just hope Lord Fear is as nervous as we are.*" - **Treguard**.) Within one minute of Game On, however, Alan has fallen off a causeway and Treguard and Pickle just could not care less about it, it seems. This is a production error, really, where Hugo Myatt and David Learner were told to act very excited when they filmed the introduction to episode 7.

However, back when they were filming the quest it seems they had had enough of Alan and his team and were all too pleased to get rid of them. It isn't a major criticism, but it just doesn't fit together well, and is a bit of a letdown.

2. Steven. Series 2, episode 15.

Having failed to gain a spell from Merlin in level two, Steven was doomed never to make it to level three. However, unlike other dungeoneers in this situation who were butchered by goblins, eaten by Ariadne or cruelly squashed by a stray block, Steven was simply plonked into the wellway room and the light was turned out before Treguard told the team that they had failed. It would have been more exciting to see a cavernwraith sap Steven's life force, or Mogdred laugh at his demise in true Tony style, but no such excitement occurred. Still, it was almost the end of the series so perhaps they were running out of ideas.

1. Sumaiah. Series 6, episode 4.

The scroll in the level two clue room told Sumaiah to be an amber gambler, but she left the witch amber behind on the table. Consequently, Heggaty would not part with the password and Sumaiah was doomed to meet her end at the hands of Dreadnort. It took almost an entire episode for this team to attempt level two, and when Dreadnort did at last crash into the picture it was not unreasonable, I feel, to expect a thrilling death scene. Would Dreadnort remove an arm, a leg or a head from Sumaiah? The answer: none of the aforementioned. All that happened was that Dreadnort blocked Sumaiah's path, she turned to the left and then the life force skeleton appeared on the screen, went green and collapsed. The team only realised they were dead when Treguard said his little catchphrase. Okay, so maybe it's a bit much to expect to see Dreadnort actually removing a limb, but at least he could have said he was going to. "*"Now, I take a limb. I think it will be... your head!"*" would be a good suggestion.

Ah well, that's that then. Let me know what you think about this feature, and perhaps share some of your least favourite deaths with me. Of course, you could say that a lot of the victories were a lot more anticlimactic than most of the deaths, but that's another story.

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 8

Quest: The Cup that Heals.

Dungeoneer: Nathan Coppen.

Advisors: Karen, Steven and Catherine.

Home town: Southampton.

Team score: 9 out of 10.

There were several very good teams in the blink-and-you-miss-it series 8, and Nathan's attempt was, in my opinion, much more deserving of a win than Dunstan's. Still, let's not get started on that again...

Level One: Nathan meets Stiletta in the dwarf tunnels. After ascertaining that he is not an intruder, Stiletta tells Nathan that he needs to buy something from Honesty Bartram to escape the level, but not to trust Bartram's wily ways in bartering. In the clue room, Nathan has to avoid some fireballs that are shooting out of the wall at him as he picks up a bar of gold and a potion of invisibility. Through the spyglass, the team see Lord Fear conversing with Honesty Bartram. Fear has apparently given the tradesman two doctored potions, and he is adamant that Bartram should not sell the one called *risky*.

Next the team successfully negotiate Fireball Alley before meeting Honesty Bartram in person. Although he wants to sell them a potion called *trapdoor*, Nathan manages to persuade Bartram to part with the *risky* potion in exchange for the gold. The rune lock challenge follows this, but the team quickly realise that the reach wand is required and that the tiles are numbered in order from one to six. Once past this challenge Nathan reaches the trapdoor chamber, where a skeletron is on guard. Taking the invisibility potion allows Nathan to pass the skeletron and reach the trapdoor, where he swallows the *risky* potion. This causes the trapdoor to open up and Nathan to float safely down into level two.

Level Two: He lands at the entrance to the Sewers of Goth. Here Snapper-Jack appears and poses three of his riddles. The team manage to get two right so Snapper-Jack lets Nathan pass. In the clue room, he picks up a feather and a *sight* potion before looking through the spyglass. In Marblehead, Lord Fear and Lissard are admiring a Sidriss-replica that Fear has created from a skeletron. He plans to use this to get close to Hordriiss the Confuser and then stab him with a dagger. Armed with this

knowledge, Nathan moves on to Play Your Cards Right, where the *sight* potion is used to allow him to see what he is doing. Despite getting stuck when the hearts run out, the team manage to solve the puzzle and Nathan exits safely. He emerges into a large room that has an oversized black cat in it. Treguard and Majida subtly let the team know that this is Hordriss in disguise, and Nathan has to get the mage to return to his true form by telling him that he has some information about Sidriss.

Hordriss turns back and asks Nathan what he knows. Nathan explains about Lord Fear's plan and Hordriss decides to accompany him until they can find the murderous Sidriss-*replica*. It is waiting for them in the next chamber. The team warn Hordriss but he is reluctant to believe them. He uses a true-seeing spell and turns the skeletron back into its true form before disintegrating it. Hordriss gratefully leads Nathan to the trapdoor to level three and tells him to hold onto the feather. Hordriss opens the trapdoor with his magic and Nathan falls slowly and safely down into level three.

Level Three: Nathan lands in Linghorn and has to avoid a mireman in the tower's long majestic corridors before reaching the palace of Maldame, the mysterious sorceress. She tasks Nathan with delivering an amber globe to Lord Fear in Marblehead, which is presumably designed to harm him in some way. Unfortunately the team seal their eventual fate by failing to gain a reward for this task, and Majida is quick to point out their folly. Nathan then sneaks past another mireman onto the Golden Galleon, which is bound for Marblehead. Below decks, Nathan finds Maldame's globe as well as a bar of gold.

Through a spyglass, Lord Fear has a confusing conversation with the red dragon Bhal-Shebah and his two personalities, which results in the schizophrenic reptile being taken off guard duty. Fear then tells Lissard to recruit Snapper-Jack to guard the Cup for them. When Lissard points out that the kidsies might be able to guess his riddles, Fear suggests that Jack base them on Greek mythology. At the docks of Marblehead, Nathan meets Honesty Bartram again. In exchange for the gold, Bartram sells Nathan a talking book that will apparently answer questions on any subject. He assures the team that it will easily do Greek mythology for them.

Just before entering Marblehead, Nathan sets down Maldame's glass globe when it starts to glow. Through some more passages, Nathan

arrives in a green chamber where fireballs are coming at him from both the far wall and the ceiling. As he is attempting to reach an item of food, Nathan tragically blunders through a hole in the floor and the quest is brought to a cruel and tragic end in its final stages. Treguard reveals that they needed a spell from Maldame to help them get through the final fireball challenge.

Summary: A likeable team and a brave attempt, but the lack of magic and a tragic error of timing at the final hurdle foiled their attempt to beat the Knightmare challenge.

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 1/2/3. Level 1.

WALL MONSTERS

When I first watched Knightmare in 1987 I was absolutely terrified of wall monsters. It's a very unnerving idea when you think about it: a face appearing in the wall and threatening to eat you if you don't answer its questions correctly. In the first three series of Knightmare, the wall monsters were the guardians of the level one clue rooms. They asked the team three questions and gave out whatever information was earned about the level dependent on the team's score.

One correct answer would earn passage through the level and, in series 2 and 3, information on which quest object they were looking for. Two correct answers would earn some information about the correct objects to take, and usually the first step to Merlin's throne in series 3. With three correct answers, the team should be armed with a quest, clues for both objects, a step clue in series 3 and, at the very beginning of series 2, the password for level one. Wall monster riddles were sometimes easy and sometimes hard; some required the team to know a specific piece of information while others required logical thinking or mathematical skills.

So, what were wall monsters? As far as I can tell, they were supernatural beings from the Netherworld who were imprisoned within walls to act as guardians. If you want some kind of explanation for how this happened, I suspect that the evil Gruagach imprisoned them when he first took over Knightmare Castle. Now, some of you may have been surprised to see wall monsters in the *Creature Feature* section because there are five individual characters that make up the wall monster clan. Rest assured that the fact that I am examining them in bulk is purely because of their extreme similarity rather than any dislike of them. I can vividly remember being very excited each and every time a wall monster appeared on Knightmare even though I was afraid of them - they really did epitomise series 1-3 for me in the time between 1989 and 1996 when all I had of those series was a bunch of blurred memories.

In series 1 the two wall monsters were Olgarth and Granitas, both appearing in the same room and both played by Guy Standeven. Some people - notably my sister - have queried why they bothered making the first wall monsters two separate characters, as they were pretty much

the same one. I guess part of the reason for this was the comedy factor - Olgarth and Granitas both loved to moan about the other one's shortcomings and were sometimes quite amusing about it. In series 2 their characteristics did become more different, with Olgarth mellowing out and Granitas becoming even more sensitive about his name: "*My name is not amusing, nothing about me is amusing!*" - **Granitas**. For all that, I used to only remember Granitas and forgot about Olgarth until Paul McIntosh set me straight in March 1996, as can be seen in my letter in The Eye Shield issue 2. In series 1, Olgarth met two dungeoneers and Granitas met four. In series 2 they had three each.

The remaining seven dungeoneers in series 2 were questioned by Igneous, a very bad-tempered red wall monster who had his own separate clue room. Treguard mentioned that his consistent headaches were the cause of his temper - they must have been very painful ones.

Six dungeoneers in series 3 were questioned by Golgarach, played by David Verrey, who had taken over Granitas and Olgarth's room. I was really disappointed not to see my old friend Granitas at the start of series 3 and may even have cried about it, so I've always felt a bit resentful of Golgarach. Nevertheless, I credit him with the most memorable and succinct quote about how wall monsters work:

"Three times I will demand truth. Three times may you answer. Fail three times and I feed on you!" - **Golgarach**.

The other six series 3 dungeoneers met Brangwen, the only female wall monster, played by Natasha Pope. She lived in the wall that was previously Igneous's, and always made it very clear when she thought that the game team were a bunch of idiots, of which Brangwen had more than her fair share. After that there were no more wall monsters - that's right, no more whatsoever! Oakley and the door monsters did their best in series 4, but they were not quite the same. The wall monsters are absolute classic creatures and I will always remember them fondly.

Fear Factor: 8 Even with hindsight.

Killer Instinct: 2 Everyone got at least one right, which is a shame in a way.

Gore Factor: 4 Some of the superimposition on the walls was a bit dodgy.

Humanity: 3 The face was human, and was there any more to the monsters?

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

First Words III

You know the drill - which characters uttered the following immortal words as their introductory sentences in Knightmare?

THE BIG ISSUE

The life of a Dungeon maid was never an easy one, what with all the cooking, cleaning and being captured, but somehow Mellisandre and Gretel managed to survive the experience. Now you can decide for yourselves which maid made your day!

GRETEL: One of the new characters in series 2, played by Audrey Jenkinson. Gretel was very vain and more than a little dizzy, and could sometimes be found giving clues or spells in the chambers of level one and two.

Advantages: Gretel was everything a maid should be - pretty (and didn't she know it!), pleasant and sewed into a white bodice. She also seemed to be quite an assertive character as she stood up to Folly's unwanted romantic advances on two separate occasions. In addition to this, I credit Gretel with perhaps the most imaginative piece of character ad-lib in Knightmare. Having asked winning dungeoneer Julian whether he thought she was pretty, Gretel received the all-to-accurate response that he did not know because he could not see her. Undeterred by this unexpected turn of events, Gretel at once responded with a very impressive and amusing reply: *"But Julian, you should be able to hear from my voice that I'm terribly pretty! Now do you think I'm pretty?"* - *Gretel*.

The furious foot-stamping was an inspired touch as well. Hmm, perhaps that example is actually more of a reason to award a high *Oscar Standard* score in *Remember Her?* Come to think of it. Let's move hastily on, shall we?

Disadvantages: Her appearances were sometimes very inconsequential - her first appearance in the first episode of the series lasts all of five seconds! Prolonged appearances show Gretel to be something of a daft lass. During her appearance with winning dungeoneer Mark she was actually trying to cook toads in the kitchen. Yuck! The team were so unimpressed by this that they almost ignored her hint about finding the clue room. Later in the series Gretel virtually condemned Jamie to death by getting him to trap himself in Ariadne's lair. True enough she was trapped behind a web, but why didn't she go out of the door right behind her? And in the last episode of the series, Gretel made herself look a fool by trying out Mildread's bogus beauty treatments, and even lapped up dungeoneer Karen's rhetoric with gusto such was her vanity. On the

whole, I'm inclined to agree with Mildread's comment about Gretel: "*It's not beauty she needs. It's a brain!*" - *Mildread*.

MELLISANDRE: She graced the Dungeon in series 3 and 4 thanks to the acting skills of Zoe Loftin. Mellie could often be found hanging around with Motley, but also proved herself to be a worthy character offering clues, riddles and, on one occasion, a spell in her level one and two appearances.

Advantages: Mellie has the clear advantage of series appearances over Gretel, and such was the often-mentioned difference between those two series that the character proved herself to be adaptable to many different situations. Mellie seemed to fit just as well into the climate of giving clues, asking riddles and getting captured in series 3 as the climate of finding forest paths, getting put into the stocks and entertaining the woodland folk in the Crazed Heifer in series 4. She was clearly not unintelligent as her riddle-devising skills attested, although her rhyming in series 3 left quite a bit to be desired. Mellie was also the best companion for Motley of all the girls he went after in my opinion, as she seemed to reciprocate his feelings more than Gundrada, Gwendoline and Stilettta, all of whom tried to kill him, and Sidriss, who tended to use the poor jester as a guinea pig for her unreliable magical experiments.

Disadvantages: Have you ever heard the expression once burned, twice shy? Mellie obviously hasn't, as she never seemed to learn that it was a bad idea to stand on that trapdoor in level one. Mellie was undoubtedly more wet and feeble than Gretel as she panicked and cowered behind the nearest person at any sign of goblins or other nasties. You could say that this feebleness was responsible for landing Mellie in the stocks on two occasions although, as everyone is always so keen to point out, it was almost unusual for a character not to appear in the stocks in series 4. So, do you think Mellie was a misfit character who suffered from being featured in two very different series, or do you agree with Gundrada's impression of Mellisandre? : "*Some silly little Dungeon maid; all curls and no muscles.*" - *Gundrada*.

So, who's your favourite? As you can perhaps tell, I am quite fond of Mellisandre as a character (and I think she was the prettier of the two maidens, actually) but Gretel is certainly not without her advantages. Without Mellie and Gretel there would probably have been no Marta or Stilettta later on, and I know how much some Knightmare fans (and

contestants, for that matter) enjoyed those two characters. Credit where it's due, then; long live the Nightmare maidens!

POETRY CORNER

They were Knightmare's only all-girl winners, and Julie and friends performed admirably in their series 7 victorious quest. Their victory was slightly overshadowed as the very next quest also proved successful, but although the entertainment value of Barry's quest is undeniable I'd rather watch Julie any day.

From Leek in Staffs there came four maids
Their quest was one of most high grades.

First through the mine, where Brother Strange
Showed his wisdom's widespread range.

In Warlock town's fair market square,
Lord Fear revealed his plans unfair.

A warning to the dragon maid,
And then on to Rothberry's glade.

The troll was passed with magic dust,
Then Raptor had Romahna trussed.

A large black cat soon stopped this plight,
Then it was time for dragonflight.

Smirky flew to level two,

Where Fear and Hands had plots a few.

But Hands fell victim to strong ale,
Grimaldine's help meant they'd not fail.

Past burning balls and spiky points
The shifty wand Lord Fear anoints.

With Hordriss saved from freezing end,
To level three Jules must descend.

Here Greystagg vowed revenge on Fear,
Grimaldine made his purpose clear.

The Arken shield's magic green thirds
Put pay to Lord Fear's gloating words.

With baddie trapped and Sword set free,
Greystagg laughed with vengeful glee.

An all-girl winning quest at last,
A classic Knightmare moment past.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Challenge question: Cedric. Brother Mace was asked by Ben I in the eighth episode of series 5; Brother Strange was asked by Rebecca in the seventh episode of series 8.

Famous Last Words III:

1. Motley. Series 8, episode 10. Oliver.
2. Elita. 6, 15. Chris IV.
3. Romahna. 7, 15. Barry.
4. Troll. 2, 14. Steven.
5. Owen. 3, 15. Martin II.
6. Marta (or Lissard in disguise as Marta). 7, 14. Barry.
7. Stiletta. 8, 9. Dunstan.
8. Greystagg. 7, 15. Barry.
9. Heggaty. 6, 15. Chris IV.
10. Maldame. 8, 9. Dunstan.
11. Malice. 4, 13. Jeremy.
12. Snapper-Jack. 8, 9. Dunstan.

First Words III:

1. Grimaldine. 7, 2. Simon IV.
2. Troll. 2, 2. Claire.
3. Gundrada. 4, 2. Helen II.
4. Gwendoline. 5, 1. Catherine.
5. Mellisandre. 3, 2. Cliff.
6. Oakley. 4, 1. Helen II.
7. Rothberry. 7, 1. Simon IV.
8. Smirkenorff. 6, 1. Matt.
9. Velda. 3, 1. Gavin.
10. Stiletta. 8, 1. Richard III.
11. Folly. 1, 4. Danny.
12. Captain Nemanor. 6, 6. Alan.